

STORAGE

FAQ

Q My network attached storage (NAS) device is supposed to stream music to my computer using iTunes but it doesn't work. What is wrong?

A iTunes' music-sharing feature depends on a proprietary Apple technology called Digital Audio Access Protocol (DAAP). Apple has not released any technical details about DAAP, so NAS manufacturers have to figure it out for themselves.

Unfortunately, Apple occasionally changes DAAP in new versions of iTunes, making different versions of the software incompatible. NAS manufacturers have to update their products for them to be compatible with newer versions of iTunes, so check for an update for your product.

Alternatively, you may be able to listen to music on your NAS using an older version of iTunes (www.oldapps.com). You may have to re-import all your music and re-create your playlists, since the iTunes Library, where all your music is stored, changes from version to version.

Alan Lu
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ATMT DW567 160GB

★★★

£160 inc VAT

External hard disks and DVD writers are an easy way of adding more storage to notebooks or other computers that don't have enough room inside their cases to accommodate more internal drives. However, adding a lot of external devices can take up space on your desk and also creates a rat's nest of USB and power cables.

ATMT's large and chunky DW567 may look like a gadget from the Batcave, but it's actually a USB DVD writer, hard disk and memory card reader, all put together inside a single case. There's even a USB port for connecting USB flash drives. Best of all, it needs only a single USB cable and mains adaptor.

The 160GB hard disk did well in our small files test, reading and writing data at a rate of 9.9MB/s. It wasn't particularly quick reading and writing large files, at 25.4MB/s, but unless you regularly copy vast amounts of data, such as DV footage, it should be fast enough for everyday use. We were disappointed with the DW567's slow DVD

writer, though. It couldn't match its stated 16X, but managed to write a DVD-R in just over six minutes, which works out at a respectable 9.28X. Unfortunately, it was very slow writing DVD+R discs, taking a leisurely 14 minutes and eight seconds. Its two-layer performance wasn't much better. It managed to fill a DVD+R DL disc in 25 minutes and five seconds, which is just half its stated 8X. It did come close to matching its stated 4X for DVD-R DL discs, however, coming in at 3.69X.

The software bundle includes all the necessities. Ahead's Nero Express 6.6 is provided for burning



discs and PowerDVD 6 is included for watching DVDs. It is possible to open up the case and upgrade the PATA hard disk and DVD writer with newer models in future. Replacing the hard disk only requires sliding off the DW567's top cover, removing a pair of screws and disconnecting the PATA and Molex cables. However, extracting the DVD writer is a fiddly process with several deeply embedded screws and a tightly spaced access hatch all getting in the way. At least an illustrated installation booklet is provided.

The memory card reader supports the most

common memory card formats, although the smallest types such as xD, Transflash and Memory Stick Pro Duo aren't catered for. The reader's slim but non-standard design means it cannot be upgraded as easily as the other components.

The DW567 may have a bulky case, but it reduces cable clutter. Unfortunately, it's not good value. A separate USB DVD writer, 250GB external hard disk and memory card reader can be bought for around £125 with a quicker DVD writer and larger hard disk. We cannot recommend the DW567 unless you desperately need to conserve space on your desk.

Alan Lu

SUMMARY

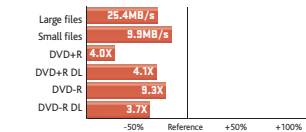
✓ Design reduces cable clutter

✗ Slow DVD writing speeds

✗ Poor value

EXTERNAL STORAGE 160GB capacity, 149GB formatted capacity, USB Hi-Speed, 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-R DL, 8X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW
PART CODE DW567
SUPPLIER www.play.com
DETAILS www.atmt.co.uk

PERFORMANCE (see page 54)



Also consider...

WESTERN DIGITAL Passport 120GB

★★★★★

£65 inc VAT

PRICE CUT!



We've seen Western Digital's Passport before, but the 120GB is slimmer. The underside is coated in rubber, so it's less likely to skid across your desk, and the lone USB port is protected by a rubber flap. Western Digital has included its own synchronisation software, although it can't schedule backups.

There's no FireWire port, but Passport is more than fast enough for everyday use and is very cheap.

EXTERNAL HARD DISK 120GB capacity, 111GB formatted capacity (NTFS), USB Hi-Speed, USB powered
PART CODE WDXMS1200
SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk
DETAILS www.western-digital.com ✓ Low cost per gigabyte; rubber bottom prevents slippage ✓ Faster portable hard disks are available
FULL REVIEW Feb 2007



WESTERN DIGITAL 500GB My Book Pro Edition

★★★★★

£133 inc VAT

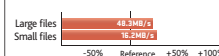
PRICE CUT!



Western Digital's 500GB My Book Pro has FireWire 400 and 800 ports in addition to USB2. When connected using USB, it managed a throughput of 24.11MB/s. Using FireWire 800, it was twice as fast.

It is great value at a mere 29p per gigabyte, which works out at only a few pence more per gigabyte than most 160GB and 250GB external disks.

EXTERNAL HARD DISK 500GB capacity, 465GB formatted capacity (NTFS), USB Hi-Speed, FireWire 400 and 800 interfaces
PART CODE WDG1T5000
SUPPLIER www.dabs.com
DETAILS www.western-digital.com ✓ Excellent value; FireWire and USB ✓ Fast performance
FULL REVIEW Jan 2007



TREKSTOR DataStation maxi t.u 250GB

★★★★★
£79 inc VAT



External hard disks are an easy way of expanding your computer's storage capacity, but you don't have to sacrifice good looks for performance.

TrekStor's oddly named 250GB desktop USB hard disk, the DataStation maxi t.u, looks sleek and classy in its black and silver metal case. It feels sturdy and well built, too.

The DataStation did well in our small files transfer test, reading and writing data at a speedy rate of 9.7MB/s. It wasn't as quick when reading and writing large files, but at 24.62MB/s it's still fast enough for everyday use.

We liked the DataStation's appearance and speedy small files performance. At a cost of 34p per GB, it's inexpensive. However, Freecom's 250GB Hard Drive, which we reviewed in *Labs*, *Shopper* September 2006, is even cheaper at £63 including VAT, or just 27p per GB. It looks just as good as the DataStation and is a bit faster, so it is the better buy.

Alan Lu

SUMMARY

- ✓ Sturdy and attractive design
- ✓ Quick small-files performance
- ✗ Pricier than the competition

EXTERNAL HARD DISK 250GB capacity, 232GB formatted capacity, USB Hi-Speed
SUPPLIER www.scan.co.uk
DETAILS www.trekstor.de/en

PERFORMANCE (see page 54)

Large files	24.6MB/s
Small files	9.7MB/s

-50% Reference +50% +100%

SWEEX 3.5in USB 2.0 Firewire Mobile Storage Solution

★★★
£34 inc VAT



Sweex's latest hard disk enclosure isn't very portable, despite its name. Like many other 3½in hard disk caddies, it's about the size of a large paperback book and requires power from the included mains adaptor.

Unusually, it has FireWire as well as USB ports. We fitted an 80GB Excelstor disk and it performed as we expected in most of our file-transfer tests. However, when writing small files over USB it was frustratingly slow, making it unsuitable for tasks such as regularly backing up office documents.

Installing a hard disk is fiddly. A lot of force is needed to prise open the enclosure, and the tiny screws are hard to fit and easy to lose, although a screwdriver is provided. Unless you need FireWire, there's little reason to buy the Mobile Storage Solution.

Alan Lu

SUMMARY

- ✓ FireWire and USB ports
- ✗ USB slow at writing small files
- ✗ Fiddly installation

PATA HARD DISK ENCLOSURE Takes one 3½in PATA hard disk, USB Hi-Speed, FireWire 400
PART CODE ST002
SUPPLIER www.redstore.com
DETAILS www.sweex.com

PERFORMANCE (see page 54)

Large files	24.0MB/s
Small files	8.0MB/s

-50% Reference +50% +100%

CHOOSING AN... External Hard Disk

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

SIZE: Desktop
CAPACITY: 160GB
SPINDLE SPEED: 7,200rpm
INTERFACE: USB Hi-Speed
Recommended minimum in grey

1 A basic external hard disk that's good enough for simple backups and designed to sit on your desktop with the specifications as shown above will cost around £60.

2 If you need more capacity, it's best to buy the largest hard disk you can afford. If you're using your internal disk, the general rule is to buy an external disk with twice the capacity of your internal disk so you have enough room for other files.

3 If you need to transport lots of files, you will need a portable hard disk. Drives using a 2½in hard disk (called portable drives) are the best value and are available in capacities up to 160GB. They're small enough to slip into a coat pocket or a bag. However, these drives are more expensive per gigabyte than their desktop equivalents.

If size is really important, you need a pocket drive. An external hard disk that uses a 1.8in hard disk (iPod sized) is a good bet. These drives have a maximum capacity of 80GB.

4 Performance can be a big issue with portable drives. If you are writing a lot of data to and from a disk, choose one with a high spin speed, as you'll get better throughputs. Most pocket-sized hard disks have a spindle speed of 3,600rpm, while most portable hard disks have a spindle speed of 4,200rpm or 5,400rpm. Desktop hard disks tend to have a spindle speed of 7,200rpm although 5,400rpm models are also available.

5 USB Hi-Speed is the most common interface found on external hard disks and is also backwards-compatible with the slower USB 1.1. This is fast enough for most uses, but if you deal with very large files on a regular basis, such as DV movies, then a FireWire 400 hard disk will be quicker. FireWire 800 is even zippier, but few hard disks and even fewer PCs have FireWire 800 ports. Even faster still are eSATA hard disks, but these are even more expensive and hard to find than FireWire 800 disks.

SAMSUNG Super Writemaster SH-S182M

★★★★★
£28 inc VAT



The Super Writemaster from Samsung

proved to be one of the speediest internal burners we've seen when creating single-layer DVDs. It includes Nero's Recode software, which allows you to squeeze a two-layer DVD movie on to a single-layer DVD.

At such a low price, the Writemaster is a bargain.



INTERNAL DVD WRITER
18X DVD-R, 18X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-R DL, 8X DVD+R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW PART CODE SH-S182M/RSMN
SUPPLIER www.dabs.com
DETAILS www.samsungodd.com/eng ✓ Speedy single-layer DVD writing ✗ Slow two-layer DVD performance
FULL REVIEW Apr 2007

DVD+R	9.91
DVD+R DL	6.31
DVD-R	10.41
DVD-R DL	5.41

-50% Reference +50% +100%

HP dvd940e

★★★★★
£47 inc VAT



HP's dvd940e is one of the cheapest

external DVD writers we've seen. It can write a LightScribe label in around 18 minutes, which is very fast. The bulbous black case isn't pretty but feels sturdy, and Nero Express 6 and PowerDVD 6 are included.

The dvd940e performed particularly well writing DVD-R DL discs and is very good value.



EXTERNAL DVD WRITER
18X DVD-R, 18X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-R DL, 8X DVD+R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW PART CODE 3744216092
SUPPLIER www.scan.co.uk
DETAILS www.hp.co.uk ✓ Cheap; fast DVD-R DL writing ✗ Not very pretty
FULL REVIEW Apr 2007

DVD+R	9.41
DVD+R DL	6.31
DVD-R	9.31
DVD-R DL	5.31

-50% Reference +50% +100%